

Colonel Mel Jarvis “Mr. Chairman” Tribute

On March 23, 2005 Air Force Colonel Mel Jarvis passed away. Mr. Jarvis’ departure is an enormous loss to the Veteran community. Mel accomplished many things during his lifetime. He received a Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Nebraska and the University of Utah, a Masters Degree from the University of Southern California and he earned his Doctor of Education Degree from the University of Utah.

During World War II Mel spent 34 months in the European Theater of Operations, four months in the South West Pacific area and he spent 11 months as a B-29 pilot during the Korean War. During his service he earned the Army Distinguished Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, WWII Victory Medal, European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with 6 Bronze Service Stars, Air Force Commendation Medal, Korean War Service Medal with 4 Bronze Service Stars, United Nations Service Medal, WWII Occupation Medal, Republic of Korea Service Medal, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon and the Air Force Longevity Service Award with 2 Silver Oak Leaf Clusters.

Wanting to get involved in Veterans Causes, Mel was a lifetime member of The Order of Daedalians

see **Colonel Mel Jarvis** on pg 6

OGDEN VETERANS NURSING HOME PASSES SPECIAL SESSION



“Ogden Veterans Nursing Home Bill Signing. Far left Terry Schow, Director, Utah Division of Veterans Affairs, Center Governor Huntsman, to the Right of the Governor is Medal of Honor Recipient George Wahlen, Far Right Frank Maughan, State Commander, D.A.V.”

“There’s Something About Harry”

A Tribute to the Late Harry Miller

On April 11th, the founder and publisher of this paper, “The Utah Veterans Voice,” Harry B. Miller was laid to rest at the Salt Lake City Cemetery. Harry was two months shy of his 100th birthday and passed away on April 6th while his family was visiting. The last words he mentioned to his daughter, Lorraine Miller was, “everything is wonderful.” In remembrance and to pay their respects to the family, over 200 people attended the funeral services. Ted Wilson, former Salt Lake City Mayor and long time friend of Harry, officiated the services and indicated that Harry lived an adventurous life with so many memorable and humorous moments.

Harry B. Miller, was born on June 14, 1905 in New York City, and graduated at the University of Denver. He married the late Shirley Nielsen in 1941 and was an Editor and Publisher just before enlisting into the United States Army during World War II and served as an Infantry Officer serving duty with the 395th Infantry of the 79th Infantry Division. He served in various campaigns; Normandy, Rhineland, Northern France, and Central Europe. Harry’s awards include; the Bronze Star Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, European African and Middle Eastern Theater Ribbons, lapel button and discharge emblem, two overseas service bars with four bronze stars. Harry was a loving

see **Tribute to Harry** on pg 6

On April 20, 2005, during the Utah State Legislature Special Session, House Bill 1007 passed the Senate unanimously. It passed the House unanimously on April 19, 2005. The bill originally passed the House during the General Session but was held up by the Senate. It is felt that the bill finally passed because many Veterans called their State Senators and let them know they were dissatisfied with their “No” vote, but the Veterans voices were heard and their call was finally answered.

This was an important day for Utah Veterans that have been trying to get this funding for years. HB 1007 authorizes a bond not to exceed \$4,600,000 to be used

for the Nursing Home. The Federal VA will pay over eight million dollars for the Nursing Home and will provide ongoing per diem payments to the State of Utah to support individual Veterans.

The new Nursing Home will certainly benefit Utah Veterans by having a place for them, but it will also create over 200 full-time jobs in Weber County, the State of Utah will get a 300% return on its initial investment and the State of Utah will save approximately \$900,000 per year on Medicaid.

We would like to thank every Veteran that contacted their elected representatives and helped get

this Nursing Home. We would like to give special thanks to Bob Jones (Commander American Legion), Frank Maughan (Commander Disabled American Veterans), Colonel Scott Olson, Bill Christofferson, Dennis McFall, Randy Knight, Johnnie Janes, John Sparks and Medal of Honor Recipient George Wahlen for the countless hours they spent speaking to legislators at the Capitol. Rep. Gregg Buxton, Rep. Greg Hughes, Speaker of the House Greg Curtis and Senate President John Valentine for forging the way for the bill to pass. And we would especially like to thank Governor Huntsman for supporting Utah Veterans.



The Utah Veterans Voice

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DAV TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

There now is DAV Van Transportation service available from St. George, Utah to the Salt Lake City VA Health care System Hospital. The service is new and scheduling is being done as per needed. We need volunteer drivers for the St. George area. For transportation arrangements or to volunteer to drive, call Heidi Hopper at the VA at:

1-801-582-1565, Ext. 2003.

What Retirees Should Know About CRSC

Congress enacted Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) in December 2002. It is a tax-free benefit available to retirees of all services with military or Veteran Affairs (VA) rated disabilities resulting directly from combat: **to include armed conflict, specially hazardous military duty, training exercises that simulate war, or an instrumentality of war.** Only 14% of the estimated pool of retirees has applied to this program to date. Please help spread the word to retirees.

The Army's branch of CRSC has launched their new RSO Corner at www.crsc.army.mil/rso/rso.htm. This web page was designed to make disabled retirees aware of this program and assist with their applications.

This website features:

- 1) A standardized Application Package that provides guidance on how to complete an application and obtain supporting documentation.
- 2) A Communications Tool Kit with a new presentation and information page to help spread the word about the CRSC Program and differentiate between CRDP.

For further information or to provide feedback, contact CRSC at www.crsc.army.mil or by calling CRSC Service Center toll-free Monday through Friday between 0600-1800 hours MST at 1-866-281-3254 or email them at CRSC.info@us.army.mil.

New Secretary of Veterans Affairs

R. James "Jim" Nicholson was nominated by President George W. Bush to serve as Secretary of Veterans Affairs on December 9, 2004, and was unanimously confirmed by the Senate on January 26, 2005. He was sworn into office on February 1, 2005.

As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Nicholson is the principal advocate for veterans in the U.S. government, ensuring they receive the care, support, recognition, and dignity they deserve for their service to our country. He also directs the Department of Veterans Affairs, the federal government's second largest Cabinet Department, responsible for a nationwide system of health care services, benefits programs, and national cemeteries for America's veterans and dependents. With a budget of more than \$69 billion for fiscal year 2005, the VA employs approximately 230,000 people at hundreds of VA medical centers, clinics, nursing homes, regional offices, and national cemeteries throughout the country.

Mr. Nicholson was born in 1938 and grew up on a tenant farm in northwest Iowa in a family of seven children. He is a 1961 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. He served eight years on active duty as a paratrooper and Ranger-qualified Army officer, then 22 years in the Army Reserve, retiring with the rank of colonel. While serving in Vietnam, he earned the Bronze Star Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge, the Meritorious Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, and two Air Medals.

Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD)

The Salt Lake City VA Regional Office has been selected, along with the Winston-Salem Regional Office, to be a Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) Rating Activity Site. The BDD Program is part of a joint VA-Department of Defense venture to ensure a smooth transition for separating service members and share valuable medical resources. This initiative originated in 1998 and is also known as the Pre-Discharge Program or Pre-Separation Program. This program allows separating service members to begin the process of applying for VA compensation for service-connected disabilities prior to separation from the military. Applying before discharge can cut months off the claims process.

Following a phase in transition period, these two VBA sites will be responsible for rating, award, and notification actions for BDD claims. The Salt Lake City BDD Site's jurisdiction of claims will be the Western and Central Areas (West of the Mississippi River), as well as South Korea. Winston-Salem will be responsible for the area East of the Mississippi, as well as Germany. Salt Lake began receiving approximately 150 cases per month from Seattle in January 2005 and will continue to receive additional claims from newly assigned BDD Intake Sites or Regional Offices throughout the year, until all 24 sites are assigned to Salt Lake City. This will result in an increase of approximately 2,000 veterans' claims a month, as well as an increase in Salt Lake's Veterans Service Center staffing. The Regional Office will conduct extensive hiring and training of Veterans Service Representatives (VSRs) and Rating VSRs to accomplish the goals needed to be a fully operational BDD Rating Activity Site within a year.

DOD Health Plan For Eligible National Guard And Reserve Members Announced

In April 2005 the Department of Defense started a new premium-based, health care plan available to eligible National Guard and Reserve members activated for contingency operations on or after September 11, 2001.

Tricare Reserve Select (TRS) is authorized under the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal 2005 and, when purchased by a TRS eligible member, provides comprehensive health care coverage similar to Tricare Standard and Extra for the member and his or her eligible family members.

A National Guard or Reserve member's personnel office will determine eligibility for TRS based on active service on or after September 11, 2001. The service period must be for 90 consecutive days or more in support of a contingency component to serve in the selected Reserve for at least one additional year. For those members who already have left active duty, they must enter into an additional service agreement no later than October 28, 2005.

Members are eligible for one whole year of TRS coverage for each whole year of service commitment in the service agreement, up to a maximum of one whole year of coverage for each 90 days of continuous active duty served in support of a contingency operation. For example, members who served a 360-day qualifying active duty period in the selected Reserve are eligible for four years of TRS coverage provided the member agrees to serve at least another four years in the selected Reserve.

TRs coverage for members and covered family members will end when the service agreement ends or sooner if the member separates from the selected Reserve, Voluntarily disenrolls from the TRs program or fails to pay the monthly TRs premiums.

Updated information on the TRS program (including start date, eligibility, benefits and premiums) can be found on the Tricare web site at www.tricare.osd.mil/trs.cfm. National Guard and Reserve and family members may subscribe to TRS updates by email, which will be sent as information becomes available. To subscribe go to the Tricare web site at www.tricare.osd.mil/tricaresubscriptions.

For those members who purchase TRS and also have health care coverage under the Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP), their TRS coverage will begin the day after their TAMP coverage ends.

Utah Division of Veterans' Affairs

2005 Memorial Day Program

We would like to invite you to attend our 2005 Memorial Day Program. The program will be held on May 30, 2005 at the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery. It will begin at 2:00 pm.

The address to the Cemetery is 17111 South Camp Williams Road in Bluffdale. If you have any questions please call either (801) 326-2372 or 1-800-894-9497.

2004 VAN SCHEDULE FOR:

**LOGAN, VERNAL UTAH,
ELY NEVADA,
ROCK SPRINGS WYOMING**

CALL:
1(800)613-4012 EXT. 2003
FOR APPOINTMENTS

Disabled American Veterans

The Utah Disabled American Veterans is encouraging all Chapter to participate in the National Commander's Award for the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the year. The nominee for the national award need not be a member of the DAV but must be eligible for membership. Rules and application form can be obtained from Department Headquarters, 273 East 800 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111.

2005 Veteran Related Legislative Changes

HB147 Disabled Veteran Property Tax Abatement: The Utah Legislature raised the Property Tax Abatement from \$82,500 to \$200,000 for 2005. This bill passed unanimously in both the House and the Senate.

To apply for Utah Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption, request VA Form 20-5455 from U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) at 1-800-827-1000, then file the VA Form 20-5455, along with a copy of the your U.S. Military active duty release/discharge certificate or other satisfactory evidence of eligible military service. The application must be submitted on or before September 1st, to the applicable county treasurer, tax assessor or clerk/recorder located in the county courthouse or county government building in each county seat.

Note: If you have already filed with the old figure of \$82,500 during the 2005 year, you can re-file at the new \$200,000 figure.

HB 91 Veterans License Plates: The bill passed unanimously in both the House and the Senate. Utah veteran’s license plates may be purchased for an initial \$25 voluntary contribution for the Utah State Division of Veterans Affairs, plus a \$10 plate transfer fee, in addition to normal registration and property tax fees. Proceeds from the sale and renewal of these plates help to fund veteran programs within the state. Colored decal emblems of the U.S. Military branch in which served (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard) are available. The plate is further inscribed, “Utah Honors Veterans”. You need not wait until renewal time to purchase the license plate.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, DEPARTMENT OF UTAH HAS WEB PAGE

located at
www.utdavis.org

DISABLED VETERANS PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT

Following is a chart that shows the dollar amount of your tax abatement based on your VA Service Connected Disability rating percentage:

100%- \$200,000	50% - \$100,000
90% - \$180,000	40% - \$80,000
80% - \$160,000	30% - \$60,000
70% - \$140,000	20% - \$40,000
60% - \$120,000	10% - \$20,000



Second Annual Combined Veterans' Golf Tournament

What: 2nd Annual Veterans' Golf Tournament

Join us for 18 holes of golf at a beautiful course

Where: Hill Air Force Base Hubbard Golf Course

When: Thursday, June 23rd, 2005

Check in at 6:30 am followed by coffee, juice and rolls
Golf begins at 7:30 am to be followed by a luncheon and prizes at the completion of the tournament.

Who: YOU and three of your friends!!

Teams will consist of four members, but don't worry; singles, twosomes and threesomes will be combined to make teams. And if you don't play golf we are accepting sponsors or donations for teams, holes, prizes and breakfast and lunch. You do not need to be a veteran to participate.

Why: To raise money for Veterans' Programs The Utah Division of Veterans' Affairs is hosting this event in order to raise money for Veterans' programs including the Homeless Veterans' Stand Down, The Veterans' Nursing home and Veterans' Cemetery.

How: To enroll a team of for more information contact Terry Schow or Todd Andrews at either (801) 326-2372, 1-800-894-9497 or Fax (801) 326-2369, or email tschow@utah.gov. Or call Dennis McFall at (801) 572-7651 or email nan39m@aol.com.

SPACE IS LIMITED. SIGN UP NOW!!!

Deadline is June 10, 2005- due to name submission requirements to base security.

The registration fee is \$75 per person and will go towards veterans' programs, above cost. The remainder of the fee will cover breakfast, lunch, golf and cart and prizes.

**Support Our Troops.
Remember Our Veterans.**



VFW Launches "America Bands Together"

The VFW has officially launched an historic program of national unity called "**American Bands Together**" in support of America's brave service members and veterans.

Beginning Memorial Day 2005 through Veterans Day 2007 — the nations oldest major veterans organization will call on all Americans to wear a distinctive red wristband as a display of unit, hope and support for our active duty troops and veterans. VFW is asking supporters to "*Make Every Day Veterans Day*" by wearing a patriotic wristband that carries the inscription "I Support Our Troops." The wristband is available at www.AMERICABANDSTOGETHER.org or contact your nearest VFW Post for information on purchasing the bands.

"There has never been a more important time to show our troops that American is united in support of them," notes VFW National Commander-in-Chief John Furgess. "With hostile conditions and extended deployments, our troops need to know we care. It is time for patriotic Americans to step forward and visibly demonstrate their support . . ."

Furgess wants the VFW to spearhead this effort. He wants 10 million Americans to "Band Together" by Veterans Day 2007. Sending a National signal of support and raising much-needed funds for already strained VFW service programs and other emergency needs.

"We chose this time to honor those who have sacrificed so much to ensure the freedom and liberty that all Americans enjoy today," Furgess said. "Yet it's critical that we not only remember the past, but also support and honor the brave men and women who bravely and selflessly fight today to protect those same American virtues."

The VFW assists all veterans and their families obtain veterans' entitlements and other services. In addition, the organization works for the well being of those serving on active duty, in the National Guard and the reserves. The VFW was founded in 1899. There are 2.6 million members of the VFW and its Ladies Auxiliary in approximately 9,000 Posts worldwide.

CELEBRATE AMERICA SHOW

"**Fabulous**", "**remarkable**", "**extraordinary**", "**amazing**", all accurately describe the CELEBRATE AMERICA SHOW. This elegant evening of outstanding patriotic entertainment combines dinner, dancing, and a spectacular Broadway-style show, accompanied by a wonderful live 17 piece big band orchestra. By showcasing entertainment that America loves, especially the **World War II Era**, the talented Celebrate America Singers and Dancers, delight and impress audiences with a dazzling, toe-tapping performance. Each year the show is all new and traditionally features a **tribute to Veterans, Law Enforcement and Fire Fighters**.

Patrons have said the evening "is better than a Broadway show." Von W. Freeman, Col. U.S. Army Retired writes, "My wife and I have attended (Celebrate America Shows) the past five or six years. We enjoy them enough to drive about 1,200 miles each way to attend. We have always rated the shows above anything we have seen in Las Vegas...a fine piece of family entertainment, and being a veteran of three wars I fully appreciate your efforts to honor veterans."

This year's show dates are September 8, 9, and 10, and will be held in the Evan Stevenson Ballroom at Utah State University. Tickets are being opened for early sales to groups, families, and organizations wishing to purchase whole tables (seating for 10). This is an evening that could be used for annual banquets, class reunions, family reunions, etc. For ticket information, please call Lisa Wallin at 435-245-3125 or 435-770-2563. Also, please visit our website at: <http://www.celebrateamericashow.com>

Important Telephones Numbers

Utah State Division of Veterans Affairs	(801) 326-2372
Toll Free Outside Salt Lake City	1-800-894-9497
Utah Veterans Cemetery	(801) 254-9036
Utah Veterans Nursing Home	(801) 584-1900
SLC VA Regional Office	1-800-827-1000
George E. Wahlen VA Medical Center	1-800-613-4012
VA Home Loans	1-888-487-1970
Montgomery GI Bill	1-888-422-4551
SLC Vet Center	1-800-281-1294
Provo Vet Center	1-800-246-1197
Veterans Upward Bound	(801) 626-7173
Homeless Veterans Fellowship Ogden	(801) 392-7662
Disable American Veterans	(801) 326-2375
American Legion	(801) 326-2380
Veterans of Foreign Wars	(801) 326-2385



Attention Former POWs

New Service Connected Disabilities Added

Gale H. Patterson, Former POW, World War II



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced Congress has approved new VA benefits for former Prisoners of War (POWs) effective Oct. 7, 2004. POWs with stroke and most heart related diseases may now qualify for service-connected compensation for these disabilities. These are known as “presumptive service connected disabilities.” These disabilities have been added to an existing list of other disabilities and ailments that are currently in place.

The 30 days of being held captive rule remains for those disorders incurred over a long period of captivity. However, this requirement has been relaxed in certain cases - only your local VA staff may make that determination.

If you are a former POW who may have been denied a previous claim for benefits, these changes in benefits may allow you to reopen your case. Widows who were married to a former POW who were previously denied Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC) should also inquire with the VA Regional Office about possible survivor benefits, which they may be entitled to receive.

In September 2003, VA Secretary Principi launched a nation wide outreach to identify and provide benefits to an estimated 11,000 former POWs who were not currently receiving VA disability benefits or other related services. There are approximately 35,000 living former POWs - many have never applied for any type of compensation, and many who have filed a claim and ceased their efforts after being denied may now be eligible due to these recent changes. If necessary, a medical examination will be scheduled to assist in validating claims.

“What Every POW Wife Should Know Before She is Your Widow,” known as Packet Number 5, has been updated and now includes the most recent laws and benefits. This 110-page booklet is available for a cost of \$11.00 plus shipping from the American Ex-Prisoners of War, a national veterans group, at the following address:

American Ex-Prisoners of War National Headquarters
3201 East Pioneer Parkway, Suite #40
Arlington, Texas 76010-5396
Telephone (817) 649-2979

Also available on the VA website (www.va.gov) is the Former Prisoner of War pamphlet, “Keeping the Promise,” dated November 2004. This pamphlet provides valuable information on health care, disability com-

pensation, DIC, and other useful tools such as toll free numbers for VA health care and benefits. In addition, there are POW Fact Sheets available, dated October 2004. All of these publications are located at the VA’s Former Prisoner of War website by going to the main VA website (www.va.gov), then clicking on “Compensation & Pension Benefits” link, “Special Programs,” then the “Former POWs” link under Topics of Enduring Interest. This website is designed to assist Former POWs, their families, and survivors in obtaining needed VA benefits and health care services. For those without computer Internet access to this information, the VA Salt Lake City Health Care Library has computer and Internet access for veterans’ use, or you may contact the VA Regional Office in your area for information on VA benefits and health care services and how to obtain copies of these documents.

The first step in inquiring about these new benefits, submitting a claim, and beginning the process is to contact the local VA Regional Office. Veterans Service Representatives (VSR) are there to assist you in every step of the process and want to insure you receive any and all possible benefits that you and your dependants may be entitled to receive. They are there to help you in determining your benefit status and answer any questions you may have as to how to submit your claim for benefits. The toll free number to call for assistance is 1-800-827-1000. All claims for benefits must be submitted to the VA Regional Office for processing.

Also available to assist you at each VA Regional Office is a Former POW Coordinator. Any former POW who needs special assistance can ask to speak to this person. Don Wardle is the Former POW Coordinator for the Salt Lake City VA Regional Office. Wardle also serves as the current Chairman of the Salt Lake City VA POW Advisory Committee. Established in October 2004 to serve as the VA focal point for all POW issues in the State of Utah, the Committee consists of members of the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System, VA Regional Office, and several former POWs.

Again, for more information on VA benefits, please contact the local VA Regional Office, 550 Foothill Drive, PO Box 581900, Salt Lake City, Utah 84158-1900 or call the toll free number at 1-800-827-1000. For additional questions or more information on former POW issues, please contact Don Wardle, Former POW Coordinator, at (801) 326-2316.

VA’s Headstones and Markers

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) furnishes upon request, at no charge to the applicant, a headstone or marker for the grave of an eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world. For deaths that occurred before Sept. 11, 2001, VA may furnish a headstone or marker only for graves that are not marked with a private headstone.

Headstones and markers are provided for eligible spouses and dependents of veterans only in national, military post or state veterans cemeteries. Spouses and dependents buried in private cemeteries are not eligible for a government headstone or marker.

Flat bronze, granite or marble markers and upright granite and marble headstones are available. The style chosen must be consistent with the cemetery’s rules. VA national cemeteries order the style used in their cemeteries. Most VA national cemeteries use upright granite or marble headstones, which measure 42 inches in height and 13 inches in width. Niche markers are also available to mark columbaria used for inurnment of cremated remains.

Eligibility

Any deceased veteran discharged from the U.S. armed forces under con-

ditions other than dishonorable is eligible to receive a government headstone or marker. For enlisted persons whose service began after Sept. 7, 1980, and for officers whose service began after Oct. 17, 1981, service must have been for at least 24 months, or the period for which the person was called to active duty.

Members of the reserves and National Guard who die on active duty or while performing training duty may receive a headstone or marker. Reservists and National Guardsmen with 20 years service who are entitled to retired pay are also eligible. A copy of the Reserve Retirement Eligibility Benefits Letter must accompany the application. People who had only active duty for training while in the National Guard or reserves are not eligible unless there are special circumstances, such as death while on duty or as a result of training.

If the death occurred before Sept. 11, 2001, by law VA may only furnish a headstone or marker if the grave is unmarked.

see **Headstones and Markers** on pg 7

ATTENTION:

The Utah Division of Veterans’ Affairs has received some donated items that we want to give away to Veterans that may need them. The following items are available:

- **An “1122 Jazzy” Motorized Chair in great condition. It looks brand new.**

The following items are for Veterans with Diabetes:

- **Insulin syringes, test strips and lancets.**
- **An Accu-Chek Advantage Tester.**
- **A Fast-Take Tester.**
- **A Medi-Sense Precision Q-I-D Tester**

If you are interested in any of these items please call Todd Andrews at either (801) 326-2372 or 1-800-894-9497. The items will be given away on a first come first serve basis.

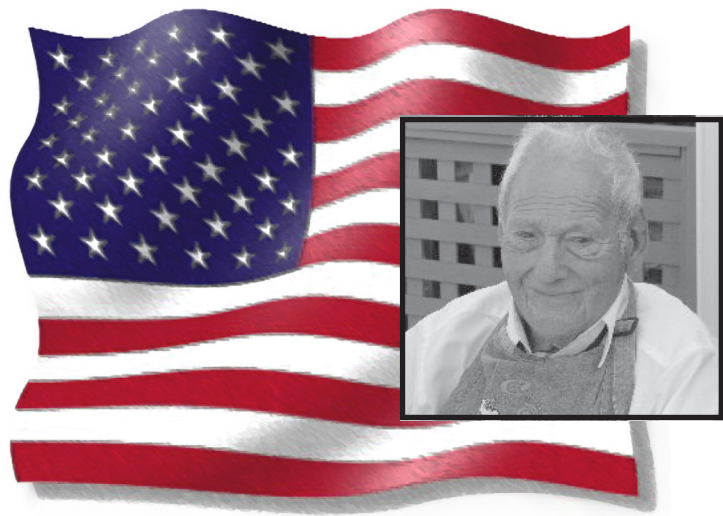
For more information about obtaining an ad contact the Utah Division of Veterans affairs.

1-800-894-9497



Tribute To Harry Miller

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Harry Miller, founder of the Utah Veterans Voice.

father of five (Robert A. Miller, Lorraine Miller, Marilyn Lewis, Alice Carling, and Dan Miller, 9 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

Harry, along with his wife and children, started the legendary “Lorraine Press” in Salt Lake City. Harry wanted to name his printing business after Lorraine, France where he served. He was also a life member of Sugarhouse VFW Post #3586, where he spent most of his life dedicating his untiring services for the veterans as a past commander. As his daughter Marilyn explains it, “Dad was active in so many things, but in his heart and soul he was a veteran. World War II shaped his life and he worked from that time on doing everything he could to honor and gain benefits for the veterans.”

Harry’s main drive to the end was to make sure Utah veterans have another VA nursing home. As the longest living veteran in the Salt Lake City VA Nursing Home, Harry once said that there was one thing he wanted us to push forward, “Give my comrades a place they deserve for their sacrifices and diligence they preserved for this country they fought for.” Harry, rest assured as this paper was being published there is now going to be a new Veterans nursing Home.

I have learned, Harry was “supporting and stubborn at times,” as his daughter Marilyn would explain it, “but he loved his children and his wife with surprising love for her and Harry would comment his love stating, “that woman is an angel and I never loved a woman like I did her.” A man of nearly 100 years, Harry enjoyed his Dutch cigars while at the VA nursing home. He was the type who made his own mind up when he wanted to enjoy his cigars as his grandson Jacob Carling describes, “Grandpa while staying at a hotel in Las Vegas was laying in bed with his cigar lit up and I told him there was no smoking.” Even Harry could not turn down the offer, as Harry said, “the hell we aren’t,” as his further explained the story

Harry was a very dedicated founder and publisher of this paper “The Utah Veterans Voice” of which he gave so much into ensuring the veterans got the word about their benefits, etc. I’ll never forget the biggest smile he had once when I brought the very first copy of the paper over to him at the VA nursing home when the paper was right off the press. This man held up the paper with gleam and tear in his eyes with astounding pride when I handed it to him and he shouted, “You see, that’s what I’m taking about.” His untiring efforts and dedication for this special moment of his life never seem to amaze me more than his love for the souls of his fellow veterans who need a paper of information.

In a recent statement while holding back his own tears and affection, Terry Schow, the Director for the State of Utah Division Veterans’ Affairs remarked, “I thank Harry for his service and dedication to his country”, further stating “I would like to extend my condolences and thanks to this friend and soldier for his service to this country. My thoughts and prayers are with the family.... May God bless you all with peace and may he give Harry his ending road a peace of mind until the day he will see us all again with opened arms.”

As a final note, to treasure our memory of him, we will always know, “There’s something about Harry.”

By: Bill J. Haynie

Vietnam Veterans

Free VA Physical for any Member who served in Vietnam

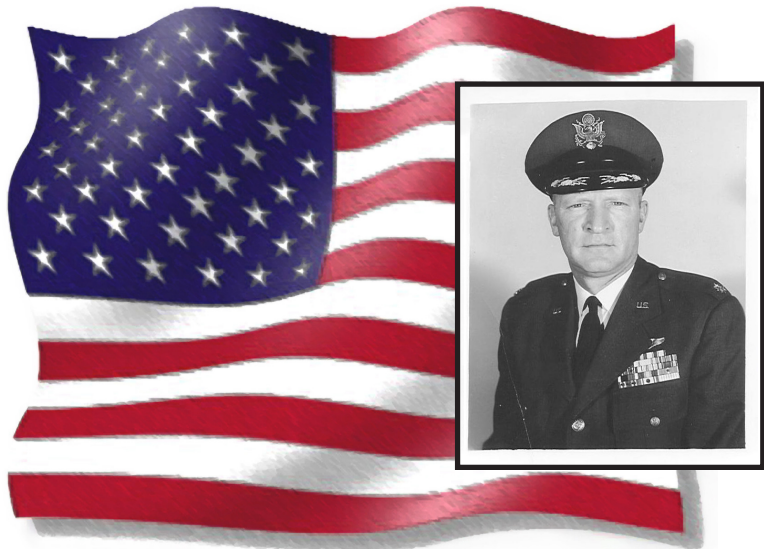
**Contanct your local VA at
(801)326-2372 or Toll Free 1-800-894-9497**

Lt. Colonel (Ret) John Sparks

It is with great sadness that we report the death of John Sparks. Mr. Sparks passed away on April 27, 2005. At the time of his death Mr. Sparks was serving as the Chairman of the Utah Veterans’ Advisory Council. Prior to being nominated as Chairman he served as the Vice Chairman. We will have a tribute to John Sparks in our next paper.

Colonel Mel Jarvis

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Colonel Mel Jarvis, the former Chairman of the Utah Veterans Advisory Council.

(Military Fraternity of Pilots), The Retired Officers Association, The American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. During the time of his passing Mel was a member of the Utah Veterans Cemetery Board and the Chairman of the Utah Veterans Advisory Council. Mel labored diligently on behalf of Veterans. He helped Utah obtain a Veterans Nursing Home, a Veterans Cemetery and up until the moment of his passing he worked on getting a second Veterans Nursing Home in Ogden. His hard work paid off because on April 20, 2005, during the Utah State Legislature Special Session, Utah was approved the funding for their second Veterans Nursing Home.

Like most great men do, Mel did a lot for his community. He held various leadership positions with the Boy Scouts of America, the Little League and Ute Conference Boys Football Program.

Mr. Jarvis was undoubtedly someone to look up to. As hard working as he was he was still able to stay happily married for 60 years and raise six sons. He didn’t just raise his sons he raised them well. In speaking with his sons, Mel was deeply involved with every aspect of their lives and they turned out to be great men just like their father.

Respected and liked by all who crossed paths with him, if there were such a thing as a “Measure of a Man”, in my opinion, Mel would be the target. We should all aspire to do as much as he has done. Some people are content with doing just enough. Not Mel. He went above and beyond the call of duty in everything he did. If he didn’t like something he wouldn’t just complain about it, he would change it. He was exceptionally proactive and was in the pilot’s seat his whole life.

Mel not only looked like John Wayne his persona was that of John Wayne’s. He was unquestionably a man’s man and he told it like it was. His integrity was truly unrivaled. If every Utah Veteran were even comparable to Mel Jarvis, we could accomplish anything. Even when his health took a turn for the worse, his commitment to Veterans never wavered. Mel did more for Veterans causes than most Veterans half his age.

Mel’s life undoubtedly had meaning while he was alive, if we can all learn from him it will continue to have meaning in death. I challenge everyone reading this article to become as hands-on as Mel Jarvis was. Get more involved in Veterans issues, do more in your community and with your family. Take charge of your life and make a difference in the world. Mel sure did.

By: Todd Andrews

Military Funeral Honors

The Department of Defense (DoD) provides military funeral honors at the burials of veterans. When requested, funeral honors can be given at any cemetery – private or government-operated. Most funeral directors make those arrangements with DoD on behalf of family members.

While military funeral honors are a long-standing tradition, it wasn't until 1999 that the rights of veterans and the responsibilities of the federal government were written into law. That law, which took effect Jan. 1, 2000, was the National Defense Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-65).

Under the new law, at a family's request, every eligible veteran will receive military funeral honors, to include the presence of a military funeral honors detail, which will oversee folding and presenting the U.S. flag and playing "Taps," either by a high-quality recording or by a bugler. The law defines a military funeral honors detail as consisting of two or more uniformed military persons, with at least one being a member of the veteran's branch of military service.

Funeral home directors must request military funeral honors from DoD, whether burial is in a national cemetery or another cemetery. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) staff at national cemeteries will help, when necessary, to facilitate a request to DoD for funeral honors at VA national cemeteries.

Veterans organizations may provide military funeral honors or may assist the military members rendering the honors. When honors are desired at a national cemetery, they are arranged by the funeral home in advance of the committal service. A few VA national cemeteries are served by veterans groups that regularly provide funeral honors.

DoD maintains a military funeral honors web site at:
www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil.

Questions or comments concerning the program may be sent to this DoD address: Department of Defense
Directorate of Public Inquiry and Analysis
Room 3A750, The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1400

Headstones and Markers

• continued from pg 5

How to Order a Government Headstone or Marker

When burial or memorialization is in a national, military post, or state veterans cemetery, cemetery staff will order a headstone or marker, using inscription information provided by the next of kin.

When burial is in a private cemetery, *VA Form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker*, must be submitted, along with a copy of the veteran's military discharge documents. Do not send original documents because they will not be returned. Usually, funeral directors will obtain headstones or markers as part of their services. Applications and additional information may be obtained at any VA national cemetery or regional office or by calling 1-800-827-1000. This form, *VA Form 40-1330*, is also available on VA's web site at www.va.gov/hmorder.htm; however, it cannot be submitted electronically. Completed applications may be faxed toll-free to 1-800-455-7143 or mailed to:

Memorial Programs Service (41A1)
Department of Veterans Affairs
5109 Russell Road
Quantico, VA 22134-3903

Inscriptions

Government-furnished headstones and markers must be inscribed with the legal name of the deceased, branch of

service, and years of birth and death, in this order. Memorial markers must also include "*In Memory Of*" at the top. If space is available, the inscription may also contain any or all of the following: veteran's rank, war service, military decorations, awards and month and day of birth and death. All of these items must be inscribed in English. For more information inscription regulations please visit the VA Web site at www.cem.va.gov.

Checking Your Headstone or Marker Order Status

It generally takes 30 to 60 days to process an application and have the headstone or marker produced and delivered. To check on the status, VA provides assistance toll-free at 1-800-697-6947 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday ET. Applicants may also e-mail about the status of an order to mps.headstones@va.gov. When inquiring by e-mail, be sure to include the veteran's full name, social security number (and/or service number), date of death and information about the veteran's service that may be helpful in researching our records. Please allow at least three business days for a response. Our telephone and e-mail customer service representatives do not have access to information about other VA benefits. To inquire about other VA benefits, call 1-800-827-1000.

THE VETERANS CORPORATION

The Veterans Corporation is a complete business source for current and prospective Veteran and Service-Disabled Veteran business owners, and for companies interested in working with Veteran-owned businesses. The Veteran Corporation provides training, financing and other services. Membership is completely free. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Education & Training For Veterans

The Veterans Entrepreneurial Training (VET) Program:

The Veterans Entrepreneurial Training Program was created to help the veteran business community by developing cutting edge business education at all levels of business development. For those considering starting a business, the FastTrac New Venture curriculum will help you create a feasibility plan or a business plan. For Veterans who already own a small business and are looking for ways to expand their business, the FastTrac Planning curriculum can provide strategic direction to increase profits and grow market share.

All classes are facilitated by experienced business owners or business consultants who bring a wealth of real world knowledge and experience to the table. In addition to the classroom training, upon graduation participants receive a gift card to Gateway Computers equal to the cost of your tuition.

Learn how the Veterans Entrepreneurial Training Program can help your business!

Meeting Your Needs

From financing your business to paying your company taxes and everything in between, The Veterans Corporation can help. For almost any need your business could have, The Veterans Corporation offers a solution. Browse our current offerings, and if you have a need that you don't see addressed, contact us and we will try to provide an appropriate product in the future. Our current business solutions include

Veterans Small Business Finance

In order to start or expand your business, the first item you will probably need is financing.

Through carefully selected partners, The Veterans Corporation offers financing in amounts up to \$2 million.

Contract Financing

Are you a government contractor who needs short term financing to pay your business expenses? Are you applying for a contract and you need to show proof of funds? Contract financing can help.

Veterans eCommerce Center

Are you looking for an electronic way to sell your products and/or services, free from the hassles of paperwork? Are you interested in purchasing goods from other Veterans? Look no further than The Veterans Corporation's eCommerce Center.

Merchant Processing

Accepting credit cards from your customers gives your company a much needed competitive edge. Many companies offer merchant Processing services, but you will not find anywhere else a program Designed especially for Veteran and Service-Disabled Veteran owned businesses.

Tax Preparation

Could your business benefit from the knowledge and expertise of a tax professional? A tax plan that meets the specific needs of your business is available right now, and at a special discounted rate for members of the Veterans Corporation.

Bookkeeping and Accounting

Do you want all of the advantages of a full-time bookkeeper without the expenses of an additional employee on your payroll? Bookkeeper in a Digital Box, a unique service designed for small Business owners, may be just what you need.

Employee Benefits

Are you looking for affordable health or supplemental insurance to offer your employees? Would you like the security of a pre-paid legal plan? Did you realize that The Veterans Corporation offers protection plans for your computer and your identity? Contact us to learn more about all of these benefit plans.

For more information contact the Veterans Corporation at 1-866-283-8267 or www.veteranscorp.org.

VA Benefits for Surviving Spouses

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/dependents/Spouse.htm>

Disabled American Veterans News Articles

The Disabled American Veteran National membership is receiving an inordinate amount of membership dues reflecting old rates, Everyone should be aware by now that membership dues wee increased July 12, 2004.

The 84th DAV – DAVA National convention is coming fast. It will be held August 14-17, at Bally’s Las Vegas. Contact Bally’s today while rooms are still available for just \$93.00 ;plus tax, per evening. The Hotel is located at 3645 Las Vegas Boulevard, South, Las Vegas, Nevada 89109. Call Toll-free at 1-800-634-3434 or use the DAV Web site to access the convention information from the direct link to Bally’s.

Registration will begin on Friday, August 12 at 10 am. The registration fee is \$25 per person for all delegates, alternate delegates, and guest.

The DAV will be participating in the Annual Armed Forces Day Events program to be held Friday and Saturday, March 20 and 21, 2005 at Murray Park, in Murray, Utah. Also, there will be a Military Appreciation Ball Friday, May 20, 6pm at the Marriott Hotel SLC Downtown. There will be a dinner, dancing, live music, and traditional military ceremonies. Be a part of such rich traditions as The Grand March as seen in the movie Ft. Apache, the POW/MIA table, the punchbowl ceremony, and many others. The cost of he evening is a 430 tax deductible donation with the proceeds from the event going to support the family readiness groups of local Utah National Guard and Reserve Unites. Dress for the evening will be semi-forma. To purchase tickets or for more information please contact MAL Ronald McLean at 268-0399 ext 247 or 792-5949.

Disabled American Veterans annual State Convention will be held June 2, 3, and 4th, 2005 at the Marriott Hotel in Ogden. Room rates are \$59.00 per night plus tax. Telephone (801) 627-1190. Call Department Headquarters at 359-8168 for more information.



DAV Transportation Van

There will shortly be a 10th van added to the DAV Transportation Program!!!! The van will be stationed in Elko, Nevada and will piggyback with the van coming from Ely, Nevada and then proceed to the Salt Lake City VA. Coordinating details are still being worked out. Call Transportation coordinator Heidi Hopper at (801) 582-1565 ext 2003 for more information.

VA VOLUNTARY SERVICE

VA’s Voluntary Service is the largest volunteer program in the federal government. Men and women from their teens to their nineties become volunteer partners on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care team. Some bring special skills and knowledge, while others bring a desire to explore and learn. Many come with a gift for working directly with patients, while others bring dependability to assignments behind the scenes. Voluntary Service matches the volunteer to the assignment, provides orientation and training for volunteers and maintains an awards program to recognize volunteer service.

History

On April 8, 1946, General Omar Bradley, then head of the Veterans Administration, established a Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee to assist hospital administrators in organizing the spontaneous volunteer movements that developed in communities near military and VA hospitals. A national advisory committee was established, made up of representatives of the American Legion and its Auxiliary; the American Red Cross; the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and its Auxiliary; the United Service Organizations (USO), Inc.; and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of the United States and its Auxiliary. The committee recommended a plan for community volunteer participation in activities for hospitalized veterans, including the establishment of advisory committees at local hospitals. The committee has grown from six to 63 major veterans, civic and service organizations and more than 350 local organizations. The committee gives direction for the recruitment, training and placement of volunteers in medical centers.

Volunteer Activities

Over the years, VA’s Voluntary Service program has evolved into the largest centrally directed volunteer program in the federal government. Since the program’s inception, volunteers have donated more than 534 million hours of service. VA volunteers perform a variety of duties at VA medical centers, national cemeteries, regional offices and regional counsel offices. At medical centers, their roles range from traditional ones, such as escorting patients and administrative duties, to creative activities, such as teaching arts and crafts and developing newsletters. As VA has expanded its care of patients into the community, volunteers now assist VA staff in such settings as hospice programs, foster care, home-based primary care and outreach centers.

At cemeteries, volunteers provide military honors at burial services, create memorials, plant trees and flowers, build historical trails and place flags on graves for Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

Volunteers have been particularly active in supporting community programs aimed at reaching and serving the homeless in one- to three-day events offering a variety of services. Volunteers also have become an integral part of national and local “showcase events” aimed at introducing people with disabilities back to “mainstream” activities. These include the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (the largest wheelchair athletic meet in the world), the National Veterans Golden Age Games and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

New Volunteer Sources

Corporate volunteers play a strong role in these events, setting the pace for the future of VAVS, along with a strong and growing youth volunteer program that is introducing teenagers and college students to careers as well as to community service. In VA medical centers, young volunteers work in such areas as audiology, speech pathology, dietetics and physical therapy. Scout groups assist in landscaping and decorating at VA national cemeteries.

Value of Volunteers

Over the past 58 years, VA volunteers have donated more than 534 million hours of service worth an estimated \$8.8 billion. In fiscal year 2003 alone, 90,761 volunteers contributed a total of nearly 14 million hours of service — equal to 6,221 full-time employees worth \$215 million. Volunteers and their organizations generated another \$42 million last year in direct gifts and donations. The value of the VA volunteers’ contributions in dollars and cents is only a small part of their total worth. Their motivation and dedication to this nation’s veterans are priceless.

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| • May 30, 2005 | Veterans’ Memorial Day Program at the Veterans’ Memorial Cemetery, beginning at 2:00 pm. |
| • June 2-4, 2005 | Disabled American Veterans State Convention in Ogden at the Marriott. |
| • June 10-12, 2005 | VFW State Convention in Ogden at the High Country Inn on 12th Street. |
| • June 23, 2005 | 2 nd Annual Veterans’ Golf Tournament fundraiser at the Hubbard Golf Course on Hill Air Force Base. Check in is at 6:30 am with a shotgun start at 7:30 am. The price is \$75.00 per person. The deadline to enter is June 10, 2005. |
| • June 24-26, 2005 | American Legion State Convention in Provo at the Holiday Inn, located at 1460 S. University Avenue. |
| • August 20-25, 2005 | VFW National Convetion in Salt Lake City at the Salt Palace Convention Center. |



The American Legion

A Short History



Long after their terms of service were over and they had hung up their uniforms and combat boots, some veterans continue to serve their country, their communities and fellow veterans by becoming members of the American Legion.

The American Legion was formed at the close of WW-1 as veterans returning from the war to end all wars were presented with a new set of challenges on the home front. With a lack of resources for post-war veterans in need of help as motivation, veterans from the era united to form a self-help organization, which was chartered by Congress in 1919, the American Legion.

The American Legion is the world's largest veteran's organization that includes 55 departments (one in each state plus five foreign departments) in over 15,000 posts homes world wide. The American Legion is a family organization that includes a Ladies Auxiliary (including a junior auxiliary) and the Sons of The American Legion. For more information of these organizations and how we might best meet your needs, please contact your local American Legion Post, or our headquarters at (801) 539-1013 or online at www.legion.org.

Veterans were not treated well then and had little; if any benefits from their service. Disabled veterans were having difficulties gaining any service for their disabilities, so the American Legion did something about it.

The organization hit the ground running and has not looked back since. The American Legion has been instrumental in getting legislation passed that has directly enhanced the quality of life of veterans worldwide, including having a hand in the creation of the VA home loan program and the creation of the U. S. Veterans Bureau, the forerunner of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Legion's commitment to service continues today as Legionnaires log more than 1 million hours each year volunteering at VA hospitals.

Additionally, the American Legion supports programs that reach out to the youth of America, such as the Children's Miracle Network, drug abuse prevention programs and teen suicide prevention programs nationally and locally. Other programs for young adults include American Legion Baseball, the American Legion Boys State and Nation programs high school oratorical contests and tuition assistance through the American Legion Need a Lift program. We believe in the youth of America and in helping them become the leaders and protectors of tomorrow.

The focus of the organization remains on improving the quality of life for veterans and their families. Recently, the American Legion has started the "Buck a Minute" program that allows deployed soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines to purchase phone cards that allow them to keep in touch with family and friends worldwide for only \$1.00 per minute. Every time soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines have come back, they say this is one of the most positive morale factors they have. It puts the spouse at home more at ease when they can hear their husband or wife say things are going well and it does wonders for the morale of the troops. Proceeds from this program go to Family Support Centers statewide, which allows the American Legion to assist families of deployed service members that need a helping hand.

The American Legion has four basic programs, under which fall all other programs. These include:

- Veterans Adjustment and Rehabilitation (VA&R): Cares for those veterans in need of medical or psychological assistance, or in gaining benefits available through the Veterans Administration. Our Veterans Service Officers stand ready to assist any veterans in gaining those

earned benefits due them. Please call (801) 326-2382 and speak to Mr. Greg Rowley to get started.

- National Security: Each year just prior to our National Convention, our National Security Commission gathers to discuss how best our agenda for the coming year as we support our active duty, guard and reserve troops. Many of the agenda resolutions considered each year are presented to Congress and have become public law, such as pay raises for our troops, full funding for much needed supplies and equipment and meeting recruiting needs of our Armed Forces.
- Legislative: Our full time Legislative staff is headquartered in Washington DC and talks daily with both houses of Congress as we present resolutions passed during our National Convention. Our Legislative drives include items presented by each branch of service during our National Convention, as well as meeting the needs of those who have hung up their uniforms.
- Americanism, including Children & Youth Programs. Our premier programs for the youth of America include such programs as American Legion Baseball, American Legion Boys State and Nation Programs, McGruff the Crime Dog, support for Boys Scouts of America and school programs such as Flag Etiquette, What is a Veteran and many other programs and the programs mentioned above. The American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion offer similar programs.

Being recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization, the American Legion depends on fund-raising programs and events for funding. The events calendars of most posts are open to suggestions on how to best support the families of our deployed troops or in how you might best support those defending America and the world today. Please contact your local American Legion Post to see how you can help.

Membership in the American Legion is open to all war time veterans who have served honorably and wish to continue serving within their local communities. Eligibility dates include WW-I (April 6, 1917 ~ November 11, 1918), WW-II (December 7, 1941 ~ December 31, 1946), Korean War (June 25, 1950 ~ January 31, 1955), Vietnam (December 22, 1961 ~ May 7, 1875), Granada (August 24, 1982 ~ July 31, 1984), Gulf War 1 (December 20, 1989 ~ January 31, 1990) and Gulf War II (August 2, 1990 to date). One must only have served one day of active duty (not for training) service in any of the time frames cited above to be eligible, and all who are eligible are invited to join us today.

Why should I belong to the American Legion? You have earned the right of membership through your war time service to our grateful nation and the world. Continuing to serve your community, state and nation is part of the obligation of the freedoms we each cherish and enjoy. For more information on eligibility and programs offered, please contact:

Mr. Bob Jones, Commander
American Legion, Department of Utah
3359 North 2550 East
Layton, Utah 84040-8497
(801) 336-6951 or 771-0181

Mr. Randy Knight, Adjutant
American Legion, Department of Utah
455 East 400 South, Suite 50
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
(801) 539-1013



VA E-MAIL BENEFIT & SERVICES UPDATES

People wishing to receive e-mail from VA with the latest news releases and updated fact sheets can subscribe at the following Internet address:

http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opalist_listserv.cfm

ATTENTION UTAH VETERANS:

The Utah Division of Veteran Affairs is looking for volunteers to participate in Honor Guard details for Veteran funerals.

Our office receives calls from time to time from family members that need an Honor Guard detail for a Veteran's funeral. Usually members of various Veterans service organizations are available, but occasionally they are not. In those situations we would like to have an Honor Guard detail available for funeral services.

If interested contact either Todd Andrews or Terry Schow at (801) 326-2372 or 1-800-894-9497.

Highlights of President’s FY ’06 Budget Proposal

“This budget proposal guarantees that the department will be able to care for those veterans who count on VA the most.”
- Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson

- With this budget proposal, the President, working in partnership with Congress, will have increased health care funding for veterans by 47 percent since FY ‘01.
- The budget ensures continuation of the Presidential priority where VA is working closely with the Department of Defense to ensure that service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and their families are provided timely, high-quality services.
- VA will be able to care for more than 5.2 million patients. With this budget, the department will be able to care for a record number of our high-priority patients, those veterans counting on us the most, including veterans of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.
- The FY ‘06 budget proposal includes \$750 million for the Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) program, bringing the total department investment to date to \$2.15 billion. The FY ‘06 proposal includes 28 new outpatient clinics, funding for design work for two new medical facilities in Biloxi, Miss., and Fayetteville, Ark., as well as additional funding for five other major construction projects in Las Vegas, Nev.; Cleveland, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Gainesville, Fla., and Anchorage, Alaska.
- The FY ‘06 budget request calls for a total investment of \$2.2 billion in enhanced mental health services, which is \$100 million above this year’s funding level. This budget proposal ensures a full continuum of care for veterans with mental health issues, to include comprehensive treatment for those veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.
- The FY ‘06 budget calls for \$1.2 billion for prosthetics and sensory aids, a \$100 million increase over FY ‘05.
- Funding for non-institutional long-term care would increase by more than 18 percent over FY ‘05, with a total investment of \$400 million in the President’s proposed budget.
- Continuing the largest expansion of the national cemetery system since the Civil War, the FY ‘06 budget proposal includes \$90 million for construction projects, including funds for the purchase of land for six new national cemeteries in Bakersfield, Calif.; Birmingham, Ala.; Columbia-Greenville, S.C.; Jacksonville, Fla.; Sarasota, Fla.; and southeastern Pennsylvania; and expansion of the Fort Rosecrans Annex in Miramar, Calif. The budget also includes \$32 million for new state cemetery grants.

Annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment

A proposed cost-of-living increase is included in the President’s budget proposal released early each calendar year. It is part of the spending forecast and appropriations request for the ensuing fiscal year, a starting point for legislative discussion. However, the actual percentage increase is set through a separate bill debated by Congress and usually signed into law the following fall.

Legislators are not bound by any specific annual Consumer Price Index formula, but historically have chosen to mirror the percentage given to Social Security recipients. The Social Security increase, in turn, is based on a Bureau of Labor Statistics calculation of the rise in the consumer price index for urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W).

Cost of living adjustments become effective December 1 each year and are reflected in the payment received by veterans on or about the first day of the new year. Whenever a payment falls on a holiday or weekend, as is the case with the Jan. 1 payment each year, that month’s payment is issued the last prior business day.

VA Benefits for Survivors of Military Personnel Involved in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a variety of programs to assist the survivors of military personnel who die on active duty. These provisions also apply to those serving on active duty outside of the combat theater.

Summary of Benefits
Survivors receive certain payments or benefits regardless of whether the in-service death is due to combat, accident or disease, including:

- Burial benefits for the deceased service member, which include a gravesite in any VA national cemetery with available space, perpetual care of the grave at no cost to the family, a government headstone or marker, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate.
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation at the monthly rate of \$993 for a surviving spouse or more if there are dependent children.
- Life insurance, which most military members carry at the highest level, \$250,000.

More information about how VA services apply in individual cases is available from veterans services representatives at 800-827-1000.

Casualty Assistance Program
VA has a Casualty Assistance Program to give personal attention to surviving family members after in-service deaths, and to help them with benefit information and applications. A casualty assistance officer is designated at each of VA’s 57 regional offices. These VA officers work closely with military casualty officers to ensure timely assistance is available to beneficiaries.

Reservists and National Guard Eligibility
When a member of the Reserves or National Guard dies while federally activated or on inactive duty for training, the death is considered service-connected for VA death benefits. Activation of a National Guard unit by a governor alone in support of current security operations does not qualify unit members for these VA benefits, except life insurance.

Monthly Payments for Spouse and Children
When a service member dies while on active duty, the death is considered service-connected unless it was due to willful misconduct. VA pays at least \$993 a month in Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) to surviving spouses. In most cases, survivors’ claims are processed within 48 hours.

In some cases VA can pay more than \$993 a month, such as a \$247 benefit for each dependent child who is unmarried and under age 18, or up to age 23 if studying at a VA-approved school. Also, for a surviving spouse who has one or more dependent children below age 18, an additional \$250 is added to the monthly DIC from the date DIC entitlement begins. This additional amount is removed at the end of two years following the date DIC entitlement began or earlier if all the dependent children attain age 18.

Payments are increased if the surviving spouse is housebound or needs a home aide. The basic rate for survivors is adjusted annually and payments continue generally until the death or remarriage of the spouse before age 57. Remarriage after age 57 does not affect benefits. Additional information about benefits for family members, to include low-income parents of the veteran, is available at www.vba.va.gov/bln/dependents/.

As of January 2005, VA has provided DIC benefits to 865 surviving family members of those killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom and 108 family members where the servicemember was killed in Operation Enduring Freedom. Benefit recipients include spouses, children and in some cases, parents of the servicemember.

Facts about VA’s National Cemeteries

National cemeteries are national shrines in communities where deceased veterans receive perpetual care to commemorate their service as members of the U.S. armed forces. Most men and women who have served in the military are eligible for burial in a national cemetery, as are their dependent children and usually their spouses. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) manages the country’s network of national cemeteries through its National Cemetery Administration.

Statistics

- VA maintains more than 2.6 million gravesites at 120 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico, as well as in 33 soldier’s lots and monument sites. Occupied gravesites may hold the remains of more than one family member.
- Since 1973, annual interments in VA national cemeteries have increased from 36,400 to 93,000 in fiscal year 2004. Interments are expected to increase annually until 2008.
- The nation’s most famous national cemetery – Arlington National Cemetery – is one of the few not run by VA. It is administered by the Army.
- More than 300,000 full-casket gravesites, 65,000 in-ground gravesites for cremated remains and more than 35,000 columbarium niches are available in already-developed areas of VA national cemeteries.
- There are approximately 14,200 acres within established national cemeteries. Just over half are undeveloped and — along with available gravesites in developed acreage — have the potential to provide more than 3.6 million gravesites.
- Of the 120 national cemeteries, 60 are open to all interments; 22 can accommodate cremated remains and family members of those already interred; and 38 are closed to new interments but accommodate family members in already occupied gravesites.
- Of the more than 93,000 interments conducted in FY 2004, 73 percent were in the 20 busiest national cemeteries: Riverside, Calif.; Calverton, N.Y.; Florida, in Bushnell; Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis; Fort Snelling in Minneapolis; Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas; Willamette in Portland, Ore.; Fort Logan in Denver; National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona in Phoenix; Fort Rosecrans in San Diego; Houston; Dallas-Fort Worth; Tahoma in Kent, Wash.; San Joaquin Valley in Gustine, Calif.; Massachusetts in Bourne; Abraham Lincoln in Elmwood, Ill.; Indiantown Gap in Annville, Pa.; Long Island, N.Y.; Puerto Rico in Bayamon; and Ohio Western Reserve in Rittman.

Disability Compensation - 2005 Rates

10 percent . . . \$108	60 percent . . . \$839
20 percent . . . \$210	70 percent . . . \$1,056
30 percent . . . \$324	80 percent . . . \$1,227
40 percent . . . \$466	90 percent . . . \$1,380
50 percent . . . \$663	100 percent . . . \$2,299

Additional Payments for Dependents

Veterans whose service-connected disabilities are rated at 30 percent or more are entitled to additional allowances for dependents. Depending upon the disability rating of the veteran, monthly allowances for a spouse range from \$39 to \$94 and for a dependent child, \$26 to \$88. Additional amounts are provided for each additional child and there is a higher scale for children in school after age 18.

- As of Sept. 30, 2004, eight national cemeteries each contained more than 100,000 occupied gravesites, collectively accounting for 43 percent of all gravesites maintained: Long Island, N.Y.; Calverton, N.Y.; Fort Snelling In Minneapolis; Riverside, Calif.; Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis; Golden Gate in San Bruno, Calif.; Willamette in Portland, Ore.; and Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas.
- Largest national cemetery: Calverton, N.Y., 1,045 acres. Smallest national cemetery: Hampton (Va.) at the VA Medical Center, 0.03 acres. Oldest national cemeteries: 14 established in 1862 (12 currently maintained by VA). Newest national cemetery: Fort Sill in Elgin, Okla., opened in November 2001.
- Since 1973, VA has provided nearly 8.8 million headstones and markers. In FY 2004, VA provided more than 349,000 headstones and markers.
- VA provided more than 435,000 Presidential Memorial Certificates to the loved ones of deceased veterans in FY 2004.
- Since 1980, the State Cemetery Grants Program has awarded or obligated more than \$215 million to 30 states and Guam for the establishment, expansion or improvement of 54 state veterans cemeteries. In FY 2004, VA-supported state cemeteries provided more than 19,000 interments.
- Volunteers donated more than 364,000 hours at VA national cemeteries during FY 2004.
- More than 8.7 million people visited VA national cemeteries in FY 2004.
- In 1999 and 2003, with the passage of two laws, Congress directed VA to establish 12 new national cemeteries. One has been opened in Oklahoma. The rest – one in Alabama, two in California, three in Florida, one in Georgia, one in Michigan, two in Pennsylvania and one in South Carolina – will be located where veteran populations of 170,000 or more reside within a 75-mile area unserved by a VA national cemetery.

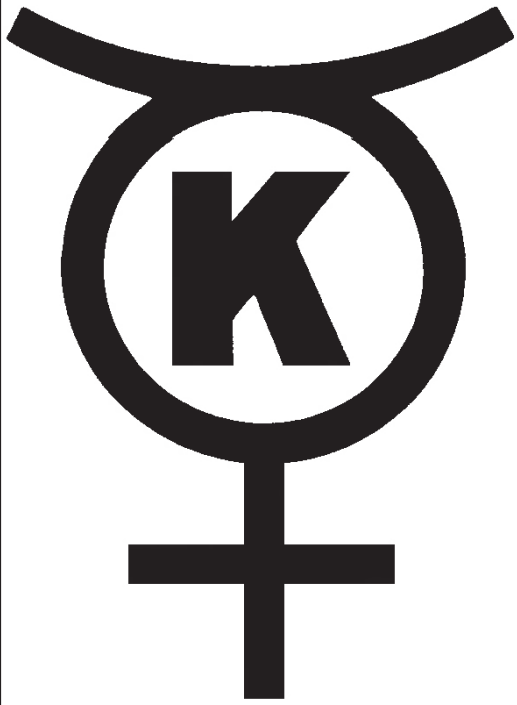
Veterans Statistics

Veterans’ deaths are expected to peak at more than 676,000 in 2008. Based on census data, it is estimated that more than 662,000 veterans died in 2004. Historically, about 12 percent of U.S. veterans choose to be buried in VA national or state cemeteries. This percentage will increase with the opening of new national cemeteries.

Other Major Factors Affecting Payment Levels

Adjustments to rates are based on a number of factors in addition to dependents. Among factors that can have a significant effect on amounts are:

- Veterans with severe service-connected disabilities may receive compensation at a basic rate as high as \$6,576 per month. Various special monthly compensation rates apply when a veteran experiences loss or loss of use of one or more limbs; loses one or more of the senses of sight, hearing or speech; or experiences loss of a reproductive organ or its use, or loss of breast tissue by a female veteran.
- Allowances may be made for veterans requiring aides, such as bedridden individuals who need assistance with eating, bathing or certain other activities of daily living. This adjustment is referred to as “aid and attendance.”
- Veterans whose service-connected disability leaves them unable to maintain gainful employment may meet criteria for allowances at the 100 percent compensation rate under a benefit called “individual unemployability.” A veteran with a single service-connected disability may be eligible if the veteran’s disability is rated at 60 percent or more. A veteran with multiple disabilities may be eligible if the veteran has a combined rating of 70 percent or more and at least one of the disabilities is individually rated 40 percent or higher.



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